

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claim 1 as indicated in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions and listings of claims.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a transaction for a sale of goods between a customer and a merchant, the method comprising:

receiving, by a provider computer operated for a provider affiliated with a plurality of provider offices, a communication relating to the transaction that includes a cost for the goods;

recording, by the provider computer, collection of the cost from the customer at one of the plurality of provider offices in accordance with the communication; and

authorizing payment, by the provider computer, of the cost to the merchant after the merchant delivers the goods.

2. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 wherein recording collection of the cost from the customer comprises recording collection of an entirety of the cost plus a service charge before the merchant delivers the goods.

3. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 wherein recording collection of the cost from the customer comprises:

recording collection of a portion of the cost plus a service charge before the merchant delivers the goods; and

recording collection of a remainder of the cost plus the service change after the merchant delivers the goods.

4. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the customer and the merchant are located in different countries.

5. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the communication comprises an internet communication.

6. (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the goods are delivered by the merchant to the customer.

7. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the goods are delivered by the merchant to the one of the plurality of provider offices.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 7 further comprising authorizing, by the provider computer, release of the goods to the customer from the one of the plurality of offices after recording collection of the cost from the customer.

10. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 7 further comprising authorizing delivery, by the provider computer, of the goods to the customer.

11. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising providing, by the provider computer, a hyperlink to a web site of the merchant.

12. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising determining, by the provider computer, a shipment of the goods as part of an aggregate shipment.

13. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system for a provider, the provider being affiliated with a plurality of offices and the computer system including a communications system, a processor, and a storage device, wherein the computer-readable program includes instructions for operating the computer system to manage a

transaction for a sale of goods between a customer and a merchant in accordance with the following:

receiving a communication with the communications system, the communication relating to the transaction and including a cost for the goods;

recording on the storage device whether the cost has been collected from the customer at one of the plurality of provider offices in accordance with the communication and whether the merchant has delivered the goods; and

authorizing payment of the cost to the merchant with the processor after the merchant has delivered the goods.

14. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the communications system comprises an internet connection and the communication is received over the internet.

15. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer system for providing a hyperlink to a web site of the merchant.

16. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein recording on the storage device whether the cost has been collected from the customer in accordance with the communication comprises:

indicating whether a portion of the cost plus a service charge has been collected before the merchant has delivered the goods; and

indicating whether a remainder of the cost plus a service charge has been collected after the merchant has delivered the goods.

17. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein recording on the storage device whether the cost has been collected from the customer in accordance with the communication comprises indicating whether an entirety of the cost plus a service charge has been collected before the merchant delivers the goods.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer system for authorizing release of the goods to the customer from the one of the plurality of provider offices after collecting the cost from the customer.

19. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer system for calculating a service charge to be charged to the customer.

20. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 19 wherein the service charge includes shipping and insurance costs for delivering the goods.

21. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instruction for performing a currency exchange of the cost.

22. (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 13 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer system for determining a shipment of the goods as part of an aggregate shipment.

23. (Previously Presented) A computer system comprising:
a communications system;
a storage device;
a processor in communication with the communications system and the storage device; and
a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of the computer system for a provider affiliated with a plurality of offices to manage a

transaction for a sale of goods between a customer and a merchant, the computer-readable program including:

instructions for receiving a communication with the communications system, the communication relating to the transaction and including a cost for the goods;

instructions for recording on the storage device whether the cost has been collected from the customer at one of the plurality of provider offices in accordance with the communication and whether the merchant has delivered the goods; and

instructions for authorizing payment of the cost to the merchant with the processor after the merchant has delivered the goods.

24. (Original) The computer system recited in claim 23 wherein the communications system comprises an internet connection and the instructions for receiving the communication comprise instructions for receiving the communication from the internet.